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WE DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING

A training exercise for the real show?

In February this year, at the invitation of the Indonesian Parliament, an Australian parliamentary delegation went to Indonesia on what was termed a good-will tour, which included at the Australians' request a three-day visit to East Timor. Observers have considered this parliamentary delegation visit to be a further training exercise for the Indonesian military, the intelligence and Government officials, and a test for the upcoming visit of the Portuguese parliamentary delegation and the UN representatives. The insights and outcome of this 'guided tour' were lucidly described in the Appropriation Bill No. 4 (Daily House Hansard, 17 April 1991) by one of the visiting parliamentarians, Gerrie Gibson (Queensland, Labour), and less lucidly in the Consensus Report which was issued in October.

Both reports confirm above all the importance of delegates going there to have a questioning and open mind and an absolute determination not to allow themselves to be deceived. There are serious issues at stake in this November visit, and all the hopes of this small nation, brutally repressed for 16 years, rest upon the rigorous scrutiny and integrity of the visiting delegation and their fair judgment. Delegates have a moral obligation - (and a right) - to obtain impartial and accurate information, and an untainted and complete picture of the complex political situation in East Timor. However, unless they are aware of the massive manipulations and charades planned for them, their objective to obtain first-hand information from the Timorese people themselves will certainly not be achieved.

I urge the Portuguese parliamentarians and officials and the three UN representatives, the ambassadors of Cuba, Tanzania and Norway to always and c o n s t a n t l y question what and who is presented to them. The Government of Indonesia is a master of running shows for visitors. It has been documented again and again that visitors on "Fact-finding missions" to places like East Timor or Irian Jaya can and have been hoodwinked. There are Timorese, who have subsequently defected and who have - on record - explained their role in this type of visit. They have, for instance, described how crowds are used, how army people are taken out of uniform to mingle with crowds and cheer pro-Indonesian or Anti-Fretilin slogans, and wave flags or spread panic. The Indonesian government is adept at this. It deceived the UN in Irian Jaya in 1969 in the "Act of Free Choice"; it can easily do it in East Timor, and there is reason to believe that they are set to do it again.

The following is an attempt to highlight some of the practices and deceptions the Australian parliamentary delegation was confronted with. Also it will illustrate the delegates' uncritical mental disposition, which led some observers to conclude that the Australian parliamentary delegation -with one notable exception- was willing to be deceived.

You, the new delegation, will be able to observe the same phenomena*1) as previous and previous delegations have, (as far back as the UN observers in Irian Jaya between 63 and 69): the same obfuscations, the same injustices, the same contradictions between what is on paper or said to you by Indonesian officials and reality, the same overwhelming feelings of powerlessness and an uneasiness that you are being manipulated in some way. Trust your intuitions, because that is exactly what <u>is</u> happening to you. You are being manipulated, and in fact, every attempt is being made to deceive you thoroughly. It is hoped, that by documenting and noting the parallels between your visit and that of the Australian parliamentary delegation you may come to different conclusions than those the Indonesian government would like you to come to. In the light of the following it is hoped that you may come to consider your findings and judgments more critically.

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*1) not to mention those you will not be able to observe, like: scores of leaders of the resistance movement having been rounded up and imprisoned just before your arrival, or the indoctrination campaigns of how to behave during your visit (raising of the Indonesian flag under death threats or regarding verbal utterances), or the intimidations and enormous threats of mass executions by the military, etc. in case something is said against the Indonesian government.

We didn't see anything

1. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND CONTACTS IS PROMISED, BUT MADE IMPOSSIBLE BY PRESENCE OF TIGHT SECURITY. INSTEAD: STAGED PERFORMANCES

There is a marked discrepancy between what the Indonesian Government may agree to initially and the conditions a delegation will actually find themselves in.

For example, the Indonesian Government assured the Australian delegation that they would be able to go to wherever they wanted to and that they could see whom they wanted to - without restrictions or pre-conditions. In reality, however,

roads (even roads further back) were blocked off, when the delegation travelled around Dili;

a large security presence was at the airport, as well as along the road into town on their arrival;

the town swarmed with uniformed police and plain clothes men from INTEL;

many from INTEL and ABRI were positioned around the delegates' hotel, the Markota, and the park opposite; they were placed even inside the hotel;

for the whole of the delegation's visit they were supervised, surrounded or followed by intelligence officers;

leaders of the resistance movement and any likely opposition had been put into preventative custody and could therefore not be contacted;

To many observers the purpose of this is twofold: a) the prevention of demonstrations occurring and b) the prevention of anyone getting near the delegation, except those who are supposed to. In this way it is ensured that no independent information can be gleaned. So, the question is not (only) whether delegates can go where they like and see whom they like, but rather whether Timorese can access the delegates and see whom they like to see and disseminate information without fear of reprisal.

2. IDENTITY OF PEOPLE MAY BE QUESTIONABLE

Mostly, people aren't what they seem to be. Any delegation visiting/ investigating the situation in East Timor will ultimately find itself in the dilemma of not knowing whom to trust and whom to distrust, who has been "planted" or who is genuine inside the hotel, the park, the streets, the Bishop's entourage, the festivities at the Governor's house, the hospitals, the schools, the telephone exchange or cabin next to you. Recently, a Hippie-like looking guy, who actually works for INTEL, has been added. People in all sorts of situations pretend to be somebody they are actually not: a dubious Jesuit Father (close to Benny Moerdani) claims to be the Bishp's Secretary, drivers of rented cars are actually in the service of INTEL (and even if they are not, they are required to report back to INTEL), hotelguests, who are actually ABRI lieutenants, the cheering and flag-waving crowd at the airport, Bupatis, who are mostly Javanese and no reliable sources of information, farmers, who (in Maubisse) are actually ABRI soldiers, a hippie, who is actually INTEL, an endless masquerade to fool the visitors and delegates.

3. ON THE TOPIC OF PRE-CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS
ONE-SIDED AND CAREFULLY MONITORED SELECTION OF DELEGATES ALLOWED INTO EAST TIMOR

Despite public assertions to the contrary, numerous restrictions and pre-conditions are already imposed well before the actual visit takes place. Delegations will find themselves caught in the meshes of Batik-diplomacy, where respecting so-called Indonesian sensitivities require not to cause offence to Indonesia. Two of those pre-conditions encountered by the Australian delegates shall be pointed out here:

a) just as the Portuguese parliamentary delegation visit is not to be investigative in nature, but only to report on "progress and development in the territory", so it was also required for the Australians to call their mission a good-will-visit and not a fact-finding mission so far calls for an investigatory tour of East Timor have been blocked under the pretext of this being an intolerable intrusion into internal Indonesian matters.

b) it was also required not to admit members to the delegation, who through their breadth of knowledge, their insight into the real goings-on, their outspoken criticism and activism had acquired a high profile on East Timor. The inclusion of someone like Warren Snowdon, Northern Territory, would have been seen as provocation by the Indonesians, and therefore did not eventuate.

As can be seen, first manipulations begin already at the level of selection of delegation members, in that Indonesia will only allow in people acceptable to them, i.e. hopefully uncritical, ill-informed, ineffective or perhaps indifferent or even bias ones.

4. THE TYPE OF PEOPLE THE DELEGATION IS LIKELY TO COME INTO CONTACT WITH

This highly pre-selected group of Australian parliamentarians only came in contact with pre-selected Indonesian officials or military men and with certain Timorese people: Bishop Belo and the Governor Carrascalao, prominent Timorese, who cannot speak freely in the overall pervasive atmosphere of intimidation in East Timor. Instead, they should meet with people, who are in contact with the population and their daily sorrows, such as Father Domingos Soares at Suai, Father Locatelli at Fatumaca, Father Ricardo at Motael in Dili, Father António Gonçalves in Viqueque, Father Sancho Amaral in Bobonaro, Father Hilário in Ossu, Father Leão da Costa in Dili, Father Domingos da Cunha in Dili, Domingos Sarmento at the Department of Agama in Dili, Talofu or Abilio Mesquita in Dili and innumerable other ones, whose hands are tied and who would - despite assurances from the UN - not survive such frankness after the delegation's departure.
Or else, they were meeting Bupatis, who are Javanese, a Jesuit priest (Chinese) called Marcus Wanandi, who is the brother of Yusuf Wanandi*1), who is closely linked to Benny Moerdani, Australian Aid consultants and the military commander Brigadier General Warouw.
How, then, is an uninitiated body of UN delegates or the members of the Portuguese Parliament supposed to perceive and appreciate the difference between what is real and what isn't and not be hoodwinked?

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*1) Yusuf Wanandi played a key-role in 74/75 in efforts to gain international acceptance for what Indonesia was doing in E.T.

5. WILLINGNESS TO BE DECEIVED OR COLLUSION WITH THE INDONESIANS? ATTITUDES AMONGST THE MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

Surely, the credibility of a delegation's findings has to be judged by their level of scrutiny that they subjected the place to, and this again depends on mainly two criteria:

a) the level of preparation done beforehand;
b) an attitude of mind, i.e. whether the group went to East Timor with an open or a closed mind, had pre-conceived notions, a questioning mind and the determination not to be deceived.

With one exception, the Australian parliamentarians went to East Timor knowing very little. The impression one gets is that they didn't want to know and were willing to be deceived. Only one member, Gerrie Gibson, had been briefed by reliable informants, by Pat Walsh (ACFOA) and Ramos Horta (E.T. representative in Overseas Countries) in Australia beforehand.

a) BRIEFINGS

It is imperative that <u>all</u> members of a delegation going to E.T. do thorough research beforehand and that they have been briefed by reliable sources of information such as: AMNESTY, ACFOA, TAPOL, ASIAWATCH etc. Furthermore, that they speak to Timorese themselves and read the latest bulletins. It is unwise to go to East Timor with a so-called "open view", i.e. to say: "I want to go there and see with my own eyes ...",or as one of the Australian delegates was saying (off the record, of course) : "We've read all the press reports, but now we want to see the reality on the ground". You cannot come out of E.T. and say, there are no violations of human rights in E.T., because I didn't see anyone being physically violated in the streets of Dili or Baucau or where-ever. You <u>cannot</u> say, there is no evidence, because I have never <u>seen</u> anybody's human rights violated, as these happen in unofficial detention places, in remote villages, in the jungle, in helicopters ....

The senior members of the Australian delegation (with that one notable exception, of course) knew very little of the situation in East Timor. Consequently, they didn't know the right questions to ask and were therefore told lies. Had they, for example, been

able to ask the military Commander names, dates, times, events, ownership arrangements, Warouw would have been forced to give an answer, which then could have been contradicted, considered for its truth content, disproven or rejected.
Also, the briefings the parliamentarians had received from the Australian Embassy seemed inadequate, if not one-sided.

b) UNCRITICAL AND INEFFECTIVE ATTITUDES

Any fact-finding mission to East Timor must be determined not to allow themselves to be deceived. This means having to take a confrontationist stance, if you want to get to the truth, rather than a diplomatic approach. Delegates have to be prepared, that this is going to be a most unpleasant task.
Members of the delegation will also have to make a conscious effort to question always, constantly, what and why something is being presented to them: the model farm, the orphanage (or why not the orphanage?), the water supply and sanitation development project, the frequent mentioning of the quantity of schools, the highly praised road development, and so on. Most likely there is a hitch.
If delegates are to examine/observe the "progress and development in E.T. they will also have to ask themselves the question: development for whom? Most Timorese insist that very little quality progress and development has occurred under Indonesian occupation. For instance, they will point out to you, that the (by the Indonesians) much-hailed road construction benefits almost entirely the military, as it enables them to reach their strategic positions in Baucau or remoter places faster, that the roads, in fact, serve the more efficient occupation of the territory, facilitate military troop transports, give access to Mrs Soeharto's marble quarries or the PT DENOK coffee plantations of a Mr Moerdani. But they were not built to satisfy the needs of the Timorese people.

Misguided and uncritical attitudes and beliefs, as in the following Australian examples, are not conducive to the process of fact-finding:

(i) to question your own right to raise the human rights issue by drawing a parallel to similar crimes committed by the early Australian colonials towards the Aboriginal population: "We can't be lecturing the 'Indos' on Human Rights, because we haven't got a very good human rights record ourselves" ...

(ii) instead of treating claims and statements made by members of the Indonesian government or the army with the utmost skepsis, the Australian parliamentarians accepted their assertions as truthful and reliable information, as real facts that needn't be questioned any further. Anglo-Saxon Public School values, as existent between gentlemen and based on trust and mutual respect are entirely misplaced here, as they are immediately taken advantage of.
The mind actually boggles at some of the Australians' thoughtless and gullible acceptance of an official's answer regarding the question of the Armed Forces business interests in East Timor. Disobedience to protocol would have been called for, instantly, in the face of a lie of such magnitude. But it was certainly a far more comfortable and expedient solution to say: " A government minister in Jakarta had told us that the army had no business interests in East Timor, and consequently that was true and thus, there was no point in discussing the subject any further". Public School values or naivety - in any case, a deplorable mistake.

(iii) The issue at stake today in East Timor is the violation of about every human right thinkable of the people of East Timor. Therefore, the delegation's argument that highlighting Human Rights abuses was dragging up old skeletons from cupboards, and that the Timorese or visiting delegates should be focussing on the present rather than on the past is not taking into account that atrocities, abuses and gross violations are occurring still today, every day. They are not talking of the past, of 1975 but of today, 1991.
You will find, that "the old skeleton metaphor" is also a favourite argument of Mr Alatas and DEPLU, complaining over the years that overseas journalists or visiting delegations generally focus far too much on the 'negative aspects' of the annexation of E.T., i.e.(invasion, incorporation, the denial of the right to self-determination for the people of East Timor, torture, beatings, disappearances, arrests without trial, rape, brutal repressions, murder, 200 000 Timorese dead as a result of the Indonesian occupation) rather than on the 'development and progress of "Indonesia's youngest province"'.

(iv) Another peculiar attitude was the senior parliamentarians initially disputing the assertions by the journalists that there had been an excess security presence, and when finally admitting to it attempting to find excuses on behalf of the Indonesians for doing so. "It was for our own security", "the Gulf Crisis", "international alert" were some of the arguments.

(v) It has to be said with regret that even the Australian Embassy in Jakarta played a deplorable role in the handling of this visit. For fear of offending the Indonesian government they even discredited the reporting of their own journalists. Obviously they regard their relationship with Indonesia as far more important than the reputation of the foreign journalists and the merit: of credible reporting, and what is very serious, even more important than their knowledge of continuing human rights abuses in East Timor, of which their political section has good knowledge. Their consent to the invasion and annexation of East Timor and, therefore, their acceptance of the suppression, torture and murder of its citizens is a disgraceful act and in total contradiction to the often stated principles and tenets of Australia's foreign policy.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

A recently issued document (13/9/91) by the Secretary General of the United Nations on the Question of East Timor, stating the terms of reference of the visit to East Timor by a Delegation from the Portuguese Parliament, guarantees the Timorese in Point VII that
" no action, including of a security nature, may be taken by the Indonesian authorities that could prejudice any potential or actual contacts. Individuals who meet the Portuguese parliamentary delegation shall not be made to suffer any adverse consequences as a result of those contacts."
One wonders how this is going to be ensured and enforced, and later followed up by the UN in the event that harm or injury has come to those brave enough to have come forward and spoken to the delegation about human rights abuses? Will the UN demand an explanation from Indonesia, still before the visit occurs, since in the context of point 7 already gross violations and incongruencies are occurring daily:
Seven battalions (∧ including Red Berrets and Marines etc.) have already arrived in East Timor and taken up position (what for?); schools have been closed and the students have been taken to the villages for indoctrination in the Indonesian state ideology Pancasila and drills in the correct behaviour towards the P. p. d. (no demonstrations, no Viva Maubere shouts etc.); there is already a curfew called all over East Timor, from 6.00 p.m. onwards nobody is allowed out on the streets, apart from the military, spies and the police; citizens' houses are systematically searched and terror is spread, civil servants and suspected Fretilin supporters have been arrested, and recently, people coming from E.T. have reported of massive threats by the military of a big hole already having been dug near Tacitolu (where thousands of people had been shot in 76 by the Indonesian army) for anyone not co-operating with the Indonesians. How are these action consistent with the UN agreement of "no action, including of a security nature, may be taken by the Indonesian authorities that could prejudice any potential or actual contacts"? Like in Irian Jaya, Indonesia has no intention to facilitate the achievement of a comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement of the question of East Timor. The Indonesian government is already breaking relevant parts of the agreement, and it is difficult to see how under such conditions the P. p. d. visit is going to yield any results concerning a fair solution. Will the UN once again let the Indonesian government

get away with their aggressive manipulations and their blatant violations of international agreements?

Unless this issue is addressed and acted upon immediately, the outcome of your mission is questionable and foreseeable: another fiasco à la West Irian.

23rd October 1991